

## **PHI 321: The Ethics of Food**

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

Fall Semester 2023; T/R 9:30-10:45, 233 CCC

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**Office:** CCC 412 **Office Hours:** MW 10-12, and by appointment



### **Course Description**

Every time you raise a fork to your mouth, you are making an ethical choice that can impact the environment, animal welfare, global hunger, social justice, and the way we relate to one-another. In this course, we will examine the ethical dimensions of how we grow, consume, and distribute food.

### **Essential Questions**

- What theoretical principles guide our moral behavior?
- How do ethical concerns impact our food choices?
- What are the environmental impacts of various food choices?
- Is eating animals morally permissible?
- How do food access and quality relate to social justice issues?

### **GEP Learning Outcomes - Humanities**

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one's own.

### **GEP Learning Outcomes - Environmental Responsibility**

- Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment.
- Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates.

**Required Texts:**

- Thompson, Paul B., *From Field to Fork*, 2015, Oxford University Press.
- Barnhill, Budolfson, and Doggett, *Food, Ethics, and Society: An Introductory Text with Readings*. Oxford University Press.
- Readings will also be posted on Canvas.

**Graded assignments will include:**

1. Three Exams (60% total)
2. Ten Quizzes/Short Assignments (20% total)
3. Two 1,000 Word Papers (20% total)

**Exams:** There will be three exams. Exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer and essay questions.

**Quizzes/Assignments:** There will be at least (12) quizzes or assignments and only the best (10) will count. You will have access to take quizzes roughly one week before they are due, but you must complete them by their due date. Quizzes will be on the material covered in recent readings and lectures.

**Papers:** You will be required to write two 1,000-word papers. The writing assignments and paper writing guidelines will be distributed at least a week before they are due.

**Final grades will be determined on the following scale:**

100-93	A	<87-83	B	<77-73	C	<67-63	D
<93-90	A-	<83-80	B-	<73-70	C-	<63-60	D-
<90-87	B+	<80-77	C+	<70-67	D+	<60	F

**Late Policy:** Quizzes cannot be made-up. Short assignments will be docked 10% off per day late. Exams cannot be made-up without a university approved absence notification (e.g. a note from a health care provider explaining why the student couldn't be there). Furthermore, you need to contact me immediately in order to reschedule the exam as early as possible. If this condition is not met, you may not be able to re-take the exam.

**Attendance:** Attendance is not mandatory and will not be recorded (with the exception of the first few classes, which is mandatory). With that said, if you do not attend class on a regular basis, you will do poorly. Furthermore, quizzes and assignments will be administered on a regular basis and schedule changes will be announced in class. If you have an excused absence (illness, family emergency, quarantine), please email me as soon as you can, and we can develop reasonable accommodations. Finally, there will be a seating chart that we will have to adhere to.

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Plagiarism is a serious academic infraction, and it will be enforced in this class. Information can be found in UWSP Chapter 14, available at: <https://www3.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/UWSP14-Final2019.pdf>. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. All written assignments will be checked by electronic authenticity checkers, which also check for AI generated content. We will discuss what this means in more detail when papers are assigned, but importantly, if you have any questions, please let me know before turning in the assignment.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:** The ADA is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>.

If you require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. For more information, please visit the Disability Center's office, located at 604 LRC or their webpage at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>.

\*Schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced via email.

References for readings: FFF – From Field to Fork; FES – Food, Ethics, and Society;

CAN – Canvas

Agriculture and the Environment	T Sep 5	Introduction and Syllabus
	R Sep 7	Berry, The Pleasures of Eating (CAN) Pollan, <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> : Introduction (CAN)
	T Sep 12	<b>Industrialized Agriculture</b> Michael Pollan, <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> : The Farm, and The Feedlot (CAN)
	R Sep 14	Film: <a href="#">Biggest Little Farm</a>
	T Sep 19	Thompson, "The Allure of the Local" (FFF chap. 6)
	R Sep 21	Continued
	T Sep 26	Laudan, A Plea for Culinary Modernism" (CAN)
	R Sep 28	Diamond: The Worst Mistake Humans Made (CAN) Amir: Hadza Diet Controversy (CAN)
	T Oct 3	<b>Seafood</b> Singer and Mason, "Seafood" (CAN) Karath: The High Environmental Cost of Cheap Shrimp (CAN) Review
R Oct 5	<b>EXAM</b>	
Animal Ethics	T Oct 10	<b>Animal Ethics</b> Peter Singer: All Animals Are Equal (FES, 352-361)
	R Oct 12	Jonathon Safron Foer: <i>Eating Animals</i> (selections) (CAN) Torrella: Costco's Inflation-Proof \$4.99 Chicken, Explained (CAN)
	T Oct 17	Scruton: Eating Our Friends (FES 391-394)
	R Oct 19	Christine Korsgaard: Getting Animals in View (FES, 366-371)
	T Oct 24	List, "The New Hunter" (CAN)
	R Oct 26	Milburn: "Chewing Over In Vitro Meat" (CAN)
	T Oct 31	<b>Do Individual Choices Matter?</b> Mark Buldofson, <i>The Inefficiency Objection to Utilitarian Theories of the Ethics of the Marketplace</i> (FES, 204-209)
	R Nov 2	Julia Driver, <i>Individual Consumption and Moral Complicity</i> (CAN) <u>and Review</u>
T Nov 7	<b>EXAM</b>	
Hunger, Social Justice, and Identity	R Nov 9	<b>Food Justice: Local and Global</b> Paul Thompson, <i>Green Revolution Food Technology and Its Discontents</i> (FFF chap. 7)
	T Nov 14	Film: <a href="#">American Experience: Normal Borlaug the Man Who Tried to Feed the World</a>
	R Nov 16	Paul Thompson, <i>The Fundamental Problem with Food Ethics</i> (FFF chap. 4)
	T Nov 21	Movie: <i>Darwin's Nightmare</i> Ian Urbina: "Sea Slaves" (CAN)
	R Nov 23	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
	T Nov 28	Paul Thompson, <i>Food Ethics and Social Justice</i> (FFF chap. 2) Film: <a href="#">Harvest of Shame</a>
	R Nov 30	Kyle Whyte, "Food Justice and Collective Food Relations" (FES, 122-134)
	T Dec 5	Robin Kimmerer, "The Honorable Harvest" (CAN)
	R Dec 7	Carolyn Adams, "The Sexual Politics of Meat" (FES, 258-263)
	T Dec 12	Susan Wolf, "Ethics of Being a Foodie" (CAN)
R Dec 14	Lizzie Widdicombe, "The End of Food" (CAN) and Review	

**FINAL EXAM:** Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2:45-4:45